

Using Writing Prompts Across the Curriculum

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Preparing writing prompts for students is not difficult. In fact, it is one of the easiest and most effective ways to help students understand that good writing is expected in ALL their classes, not just English. Teachers need a little simple instruction and then a little guidance in finding good rubrics to use for grading.

There are two basic components of a writing prompt: a) *the situation*; and, b) *the directions for writing*. Below is an example from Virginia:

“The writer Mark Twain once said, “The best way to cheer yourself up is to cheer somebody else up.” Write about a time when you made yourself feel better by helping someone else.”

The writing situation is, “The writer Mark Twain once said,”

The direction for writing is, “Write about a time when you ...”

Using writing prompts to assign writing across the curriculum is a great way to make sure students recognize the need to use prior learning in English class to complete the assignment. Using writing prompts creates a situation in which students see the connection between what they have learned about good writing and your class.

Writing prompts in mathematics could look something like this:

“Right Triangles and rectangles have commonalities as well as differences. Write an essay comparing and contrasting right triangles and rectangles.”